

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD AT THE STUDIO OF CHARLES GRAFLY, LANESVILLE STATION, MASSACHUSETTS,
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1921.

A committee meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held at the studio of Charles Grafly, Lanesville Station, Massachusetts, Wednesday, August 3, 1921.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Fraser;
Mr. Bacon;

also Lieut. Colonel C. O. Sherrill,
Secretary and Executive Officer, and Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Assistant to the Secretary.

1. MEADE MEMORIAL: Mr. Grafly brought to the attention of the members of the Commission a plastiline model of the statue of General Meade to be placed in Union Square, Washington, D. C., as a gift of the State of Pennsylvania. The model was one-half size. The figures in the group, eight in number, to represent characteristics of General Meade, were thus 4-1/2 feet high, the wings 3 feet long. The model was thought to be very well executed. Mr. Grafly stated that the monument will be cut in Tennessee marble and he expects Piccirilli Brothers, of New York City, will do the work. Mr. Grafly called attention to the wings which he said will be at least 6 feet long in the statue, and suggested that in view of the size they be cut in marble rather than made in bronze. The Commission endorsed the suggestion. The standard over the head of Meade will be in gold. A letter just received from Simon and Simon, the architects, with sheet No. 3 of the foundation plans, stated that funds were available for beginning of the foundation and the committee recommended that the plan be referred to the Office of

Public Buildings and Grounds, and that the architects be asked to proceed in their work toward constructing the foundation.

2. ✓ PEARY MEMORIAL: Mr. Harry L. Davis, President, of the Davis Memorial Company, of Syracuse, New York, submitted designs for inscriptions on the Peary Memorial with letter stating that he did not have room for the inscriptions as recommended by the Commission, if cut in large letters. The committee, therefore, recommended four lines on the face and the right side. Mr. Bacon called attention to an error in designing the letters "M" and "U". The committee requested that the letters do not appear above the line. (Exhibit A).

3. EXECUTIVE ORDER: Mr. Moore reported that on July 8, 1921 the President had signed the following Executive Order pertaining to the Commission of Fine Arts under which the District of Columbia will be required to submit designs to the Commission of Fine Arts, especially for buildings:

"It is hereby ordered that essential matters relating to the design of medals, insignia and coins, produced by the executive departments, also the designs of statues, fountains and monuments, and all important plans for parks and all public buildings, constructed by executive departments or the District of Columbia, which in any essential way affect the appearance of the City of Washington, or the District of Columbia, shall be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for advice as to the merits of such designs before the executive officer having charge of the same shall approve thereof."

The members of the Commission expressed their appreciation of the issuance of the order. (Exhibit B).

4. ✓ STATUE OF DANTE: On August 2, 1921 the Commission received a letter from Hon. W. R. Castle, Acting Chief, Division of Western European Affairs, Department of State, and from Signor Guido Sebatta, Charge d'Affairs of Italy, including photographs, concerning a proposed gift of a statue of Dante by

Italians of New York to the City of Washington. Photographs were also submitted showing relief work proposed on the pedestal representing scenes from Dante's "Inferno".

The statue of Dante will be full size and it was proposed to place it on a high pedestal so that the monument would be thirty feet high. It was desired to dedicate the statue early in October when there is to be a memorial celebration in Washington of the six-hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante.

The advice of the Commission of Fine Arts was requested as to the acceptability of the proposed gift and as to a site for the statue.

After a discussion of the submission the members of the Commission concluded that a statue of Dante substantially similar to the design shown in the photograph would be a suitable present to the city of Washington, and could be located in Meridian Hill Park which is being developed along the lines of an Italian Garden. The photograph promises a good statue but the embellishments proposed on the pedestal should be omitted as being in the nature of illustrations rather than statuary, and they would detract rather than add to the excellence of the result. The pedestal should not be high, but should be lowered and simplified. With these changes the Commission would recommend to Congress a site for the statue to be selected by the Commission of Fine Arts with the understanding that the statue would be placed in Meridian Hill Park. The Potomac Park site suggested by the persons having the gift in charge would be open only to a statue of an American citizen who had rendered conspicuous service to the United States. Mr. Moore stated that in accordance with the request of Signor Sebatta he would arrange for a personal interview with him.

The committee adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

C O P Y

August 18, 1921

Dear Mr. Davis:

Your letter of July 13, with which you transmitted blueprints of the proposed inscription for the Peary Memorial, was brought to the attention of the members of the Commission at a meeting on August third.

It is noted that the arrangement of the inscription for the left side and the face (blueprint marked #2) is according to the specifications indicated in the letter of June 13, 1921, addressed to you. The Commission request, however, that the pointed letters be changed so as not to appear above the line, and the letter "M" should be redesigned to conform to the suggestion noted on blueprint marked #1.

As to the inscription for the face and the right side of the memorial (as shown on the blueprint marked #1) the Commission recommend four lines in each case arranged as follows:

Inscription on the face:

Robert Edwin Peary
Discoverer Of
The North Pole
April 6, 1909

Inscription on the right side:

Rear Admiral
United States Navy
Writer, Scientist
Navigator, Explorer.

The Commission request that also in these two inscriptions you do not have the pointed letters extend above the line, and attention is called to the suggestion in regard to redesigning the letter "M".

Careful inquiry has been made at the Navy Department, and the Commission has been officially informed that Mr. Peary was a Rear Admiral, and the inscription should be accordingly.

It being required that the design and inscriptions must have the approval of the War Department, the matter was referred to that Department for this purpose. The Commission has been advised by the Office of the Quartermaster General that the Assistant Secretary of War has approved the design and the inscriptions. Mrs. Peary is to report as to the correctness of the inscriptions and to advise you accordingly. It will be necessary for you to wait for detailed instructions from the Quartermaster Supply Officer, Washington General Intermediate Depot, Washington, D. C.

Sincerely, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Harry L. Davis, President,
Davis Memorial Company,
Syracuse, New York.

EXHIBIT A.

C O P Y

August 5, 1921.

My dear Mr. Christian:

Your letter of July 29, transmitting a copy of the Executive Order relating to the Commission of Fine Arts, has been received. For your good offices in this matter will you please accept the sincere thanks of the Commission.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore

Chairman.

Hon. George B. Christian, Jr.,
Secretary to the President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

XNIBI B.

